

Dear FCC Commissioners & Staff:

My name is Larry Mehlbauer, and I am writing to you to strongly request that you do not change the rules that require telephone companies to provide ISPs access to the public switched phone network. To do so will effectively close down most local ISPs and conform all of us to the corporate wishes of big telephone companies.

In addition to limiting customer choices, and causing an almost certain extravagant increase in prices, such a move will subject all of us who use local ISPs (and I understand we number in the millions) to the same type of poor customer service that we receive through our telephone hookups with the big telephone companies (Bells, AT&T, etc.) It is nearly impossible to speak to a human in case of problems, and if by chance you are able to talk to someone, they are usually curt and rude. Billing statements are obscure and highly technical in order to hide costs or to charge for services never ordered. Continual attempts are made by big telephone companies to add services that are not needed, and services are bundled in such a way as to hide the component parts of the package. IMAGINE WHAT THE BIG TELEPHONE COMPANIES WILL DO WHEN THEY COMPLETELY CONTROL ACCESS TO DSL SERVICE. Many of their direct advertising and sales approaches are highly questionable from an ethical point of view. Are they now to get monopoly power over hi-speed access? Think of the games they will play when their control is absolute. I, for one, do not want to deal with the phone companies any more than I absolutely have to.

As bad as the phone companies are, the cable companies are much, much worse. I doubt that there has ever been an industry which more openly displays so much contempt for the consumer as do the cable companies, most of whom are protected by exclusive contracts granted by local governmental bodies. The record is replete with instances where corruption has been an ingredient in the awarding of many of these exclusive contracts.

I strongly urge you, as commissioners protecting the public interest, to protect the access of local ISPs to public telephone networks and, in the process, protect the rights of consumers generally.

Thank You!

Sincerely,

Larry M. Mehlbauer
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